A Modern Fairy Tale

Little Red Riding Hood—Another Version

Robert Shook

The following fairy tale is, the author notes, a light-hearted offering to all principals who go through the yearly frustrations of budget development.

WE ALL KNOW the story of Little Red Riding Hood merrily skipping through the woods with her basket of goodies on the way to Grandmama's house.

Have you ever considered how Little Red Riding Hood happened to be skipping through the woods that fateful day? Even more difficult to imagine would be the same basic story with our central character being Little Red Riding Principal. Quite possibly this is what might have happened.

"Mommy Budget Maker," said Little Red Riding Principal, "I am going to take a basket of goodies to Grandmother's schoolhouse, cause she could really use the stuff. Besides, this way I can skip merrily through the woods, and do the whole fresh air routine."

"That's a wonderful idea, Little Red Riding Principal," said Momma Budget Maker, "because you are certainly the one who is closest to the needs of dear old Grandmama, and since you have the responsibility for her care and feeding, I am glad to see you demonstrate that you have the decision-making capability to be accountable for her well being."

"I don't know what you're talking about," said Little Red Riding Principal, "But I will deliver the stuff anyhow."

Robert Shook is principal, Middlebrook School, Wilton, Conn.

"Hold on now, Little Red Riding Principal, let's not make any rash decisions. There are many things that we have to consider before you can requisition any goodies. How can we determine how many goodies grandmama needs? How big a share of our pie should she get? Have you done a five-year historical study on what she has consumed in the past? Have we projected a cost analysis well into the future to determine what she will need three, four, and five years from now? Have you touched bases with all of your publics to be sure that your suggested diet meets with their philosophical justifications? What is the process by which we normally determine whether or not these are really good solid basics, as opposed to just fluff? Have you taken into account all of the other members of the school family and how they might feel about increasing or decreasing their contributions to feed her ever increasing appetite?"

"Honest, Mother Budget Maker," Riding Principal said, "she's been on such a meager diet these last few years that nothing has been wasted in the past. She can hardly survive on what we are giving her now. We have very little possibility of changing what she's been getting, and there is certainly little chance of either adding new programs for her or increasing the number of people we have to take care of her. It isn't that I don't think we should not always look to make sure that she is getting the right things" she said, "but it seems that we may be going through an awful lot of work when it's going to mean a very little difference at best."

"Little Red Riding Principal," said Mother Budget Maker, "you really don't understand the situation. There are many people out there in the forest who don't quite trust what you have been doing with these overly generous provisions that we have been giving you for years to take care of Grandmama. Out there in the jungle skepticism grows wild, while trust becomes a rare commodity because of the care it takes to cultivate it."

So Little Red Riding Principal took what seemed to be very rational and business-like advice and did what she was told. She studied; she researched; she did cost breakdowns; she prepared many charts and graphs; she held many meetings; she held many, many meetings; she wrote reports; she paid attention to her public relations; she met with representative groups from the forest; she worked many long and hard hours. Finally, after many months, the great decision was made and, except for only minor changes, she was given a continuation basket of goodies very similar to that which she had had the previous year, and off she went, not quite as merry, and not skipping at all to Grandmother's schoolhouse.

At this point there seems to be some confusion in the story told. Some people say that by the time Little Red Riding Principal got to Grandmother's schoolhouse, Grandmama was dead. Others say that Grandmother was in such an undernourished condition, that Little Red Riding Principal ran from the house in sheer frustration.

There is no truth to the rumor that Grandmother's basket got any fuller.

No one knows if anybody lived happily ever after.

MORAL: Grandmama better get out into the woods and do some cultivating on her own or she is going to be hungry for a long time to come.

Workshops for Job Developers

The critical problem of unemployment—estimated at 30.7 percent among black and other minority youth—demands some fresh solutions, according to the Work in America Institute. With funds from the Department of Labor, the Institute recently conducted a series of workshops in three U.S. cities for the purpose of generating some solutions.

Job developers attended the workshops in order to learn some new techniques for finding jobs for the hard-to-employ. The program included general instructional sessions, the presentation of three outstanding job development case studies, and small-group workshops stressing specific aspects of job development vital to the participants.

The workshops proved to be so popular that plans are now underway to repeat the sessions in 1980.

☐ For more information about the workshops, contact: Rhoda Pauley, vice president, Work in America Institute, Inc., 700 White Plains Rd., Scarsdale, N.Y. 10583.